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Report of the Results of the Office of Personnel's Evaluation
of the Agency's Employee Performance Appraisal Program

1980-1981

Office of Personnel
Policy and Programs Staff

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Executive Summary

The evaluation of the CIA Employee Performance Appraisal Program undertaken by the Office of Personnel is provided in the accompanying report. The report contains several major sections and offers conclusions and recommendations. This summary abstracts the contents of the report.

Survey Demographics

Reviews the data characteristics of a stratified random sample of approximately 10 percent of Agency full-time civilian employees. Nearly two-thirds of those surveyed responded. The distribution of respondents by age and sex is comparable to that of the Agency population at large, and the results of the survey may be accepted as representative of the attitudes and opinions of the Agency workforce.

The PAR Survey - The Employee's Perspective

Validity of Performance Appraisal

Reviews survey findings relative to employee attitudes on the significance of performance appraisal and the accuracy of ratings. A significant number of respondents (41 percent) are not convinced that improved job performance results in a corresponding improvement in the level of one's performance rating. Employee attitudes toward the accuracy of performance ratings are evenly divided; however, a large number (69 percent) believes supervisors give subordinates higher ratings than they deserve. Many employees question whether putting forth the effort to improve their job performance is worth it.

The Advance Work Plan (AWP)

Discusses employee attitudes toward the AWP and compares Agency experience with that of other Federal employees. In both cases a large number (45-53 percent) had little if anything to do with establishing performance objectives. Less than a majority (44 percent) believes the AWP will help improve the accuracy of their performance rating.

Evaluation of Potential (EOP)

Discloses that three-fourths of those surveyed believe the EOP to be fair and accurate, and suggests that this favorable reaction may very well stem from the possibility that nearly all respondents were given positive feedback. The survey results on the value of EOP differ markedly from the results obtained from a survey of Agency personnel evaluation boards and panels.

Supervisory Feedback

States that many respondents (73 percent) ~~believe their performance ratings are consistent with what their supervisor leads them to believe is the level of their day-to-day work performance.~~ Only 50 percent are satisfied with the amount of information they receive from their supervisors about their job performance, i.e., they want something more than a good rating level. ~~Nearly all respondents (92 percent) believe they know what is expected of them on the job,~~ and, on the whole, they have ~~positive attitudes toward their supervisors.~~ This statistical data is in contrast to the large number of respondents who offered written comments questioning the ability of their supervisors to prepare performance appraisals which are both fair and accurate.

Employee Satisfaction With the New PAR

Reveals that those surveyed do not, in the majority, claim satisfaction with the new performance appraisal system. Many respondents remain undecided (37 percent), and nearly 27 percent prefer a different system. ~~Many respondents (71 percent) believe that the training of supervisors would improve the overall effectiveness of the appraisal process.~~ Nearly all respondents (93 percent) agree that, at least to some extent, evaluation panels should use information other than an employee's work record to make promotion determinations.

The PAR Survey and Agency Supervisors

Establishes that ~~most supervisor respondents (90 percent) believe at least to some extent that the typical supervisor would give an employee a higher rating to avoid a confrontation.~~ Over 72 percent of the responding supervisors experience at least some difficulty with evaluating a subordinate's potential. Nearly a third of the supervisor respondents believe their immediate superior shows little interest in their skill in evaluating subordinates or does not view it as an important element of their job.

The PAR Survey - Employees Written Comments

Offers a broad sampling of the comments employees were invited to share regarding their thoughts and feelings about the new PAR. They responded in great numbers and often expressed themselves at length. It is evident they had given considerable thought to the subject and wrote with sincerity of purpose and conviction. The most common thread observed was their concern with personnel evaluation in general, and with the questionable quality of supervision and management.

Evaluation Board/Panel Assessment of PAR

Provides an analysis of the information requested from 130 Career Service personnel evaluation boards and panels. The purpose was to obtain input from

those directly involved in the use of the PAR while making comparative evaluations of employees. Approximately 61 percent of those surveyed responded. Of those responding, nearly one-half believe the PAR is no different than its predecessor (only 13 percent thought it was better); a majority find the EOP not to be useful; the AWP, as presently viewed, is not strongly supported, and plays only a minor role for panels; although the PAR rating scale is viewed as better than the old by 41 percent of the panels, the PAR format and package is found by a comparable number to be cumbersome and difficult to use. No unanimity exists among or within panels as to specific actions to take to improve the PAR.

PAR Rating Scale Statistics

Reveals that present employee rating levels remain comparable to those of the previously used fitness report. There is evidence, however, that significant differences in PAR rating levels exists among the Career Services (the NFAC Career Service has the lowest average rating level). A statistical analysis also points to the fact that an employee's rating level correlates positively with his or her grade level, i.e., the higher one's grade the higher one's rating level.

Discussion and Conclusions

1. This part of the report notes the major findings of the evaluation and some of the problems associated with performance appraisal in general, i.e.,

- ° It is difficult to determine whether the findings reflect mostly on the system or the way it is presently being applied.
- ° Nearly half of those responding to the survey claim they have not received a formal briefing or workshop on the new PAR.
- ° Many managers failed to disregard the old system entirely when applying the new, e.g., they sought to relate the numerical ratings of the PAR with the letter ratings of the former Fitness Report.
- ° The AWP was misconstrued by many employees to be a re-labeled Letter of Instruction, a form no longer used.
- ° The EOP is not serving a useful function in the PAR program. A substantial number of supervisors experience some difficulty preparing it and are inclined to believe panels are better prepared to make such an assessment.
- ° The PAR form is cumbersome and requires more time to complete than its predecessor; it should be simplified.

- ° The PAR, as presently applied, is not particularly effective as an instrument for use by panels in ranking employees in a competitive evaluation.
- ° Supervisors' performance standards are perceived by employees as highly subjective, and are subject to change whenever supervisors are replaced.

2. Some authorities are highly skeptical that the Federal Government can implement a performance appraisal system based on "merit." This evaluation does disclose many problems associated with the PAR, yet employees remain very much interested in the subject. There is evidence, however, of growing cynicism among employees whether the performance appraisal program will ever improve. Consequently, there are a number of employees who advocate not "tinkering" with the program. For this reason we should proceed with caution and not introduce major changes too soon.

Recommendations

1. The Agency should continue to seek improvements to its performance appraisal program recognizing that some of the issues will be difficult to address. We should not act hastily to invoke change simply because the present PAR system has some serious problems. Work on this subject is continuing throughout the Federal Government and there is hope for developing a significantly better program in the months to come.

2. Certain actions should be taken in the meanwhile to strengthen the PAR as study continues on the subject. The following is recommended:

- a. Modify and simplify the PAR format (eliminate the use of carbons);
- b. Discontinue the use of the EOP;
- c. Retain the AWP for record purposes in the component soft file not in the Official Personnel Folder.
- d. Increase the emphasis on performance appraisal skills in managerial training courses;
- e. Require supervisors to comply with dated 23 February 1981, which focuses attention on the need to develop explicit performance standards at the "4" level of performance.

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IV
C O N F I D E N T I A L

Report of the Results of the Office of Personnel Evaluation
of the Agency's Employee Performance Appraisal Program

1980-81

Introduction

A newly revised employee performance appraisal program was introduced in the Agency in October 1979. This report provides an evaluation of this revised program and a general statement on the status of employee performance appraisal in the Agency.

A 10 percent stratified random sample of Agency full-time civilian employees was surveyed over a period of several months commencing in the Spring of 1980. This staggered approach to employee surveying was based on the fact employee performance appraisals are scheduled throughout the year rather than accomplished at one time in one annual exercise. Performance appraisals are scheduled according to employee grade level and employees were surveyed shortly after their appraisal under the revised program. We believe that the fresher the employee exposure is to a subject the more likely their attitudes and expressions of opinion reflect their true points of view.

The employee survey represents the primary data base for the report although several other evaluation methods were used. They are:

1. A review of a random sampling of completed Performance Appraisal Reports (PARs) as received by the Office of Personnel;
2. The perceptions of Agency personnel evaluation boards and panels as to the utility of the PAR;
3. An estimate of the apparent cost effectiveness of preparing the PAR as observed by component personnel officers and,
4. A statistical analysis of overall performance rating levels on PARs submitted during 1980.

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I. Survey Demographics

A. A total of [] employees were surveyed randomly at the time of their scheduled annual performance appraisal. Approximately two-thirds of the questionnaires were returned in usable condition. Considering the survey was world-wide and that a fair number of "misses" occurred because potential participants either retired, resigned, were on Leave Without Pay, or for other reasons were never reached, the response rate was quite satisfactory.

B. The questionnaire sought information on each employee's Career Service affiliation as well as other demographic data. We erred in assuming that employees know their Career Service symbol, e.g., M=DDA, I=NFAC, etc. Over 35 percent of the respondents claim they do not know their Career Service designation.

C. Data analysis also reveals that the distribution of respondents by age and sex is comparable to that of the Agency employee population. It was ascertained that 71 percent of those surveyed in the domestic and foreign field returned their questionnaire. The sample size and representativeness suggest that the results are to be trusted as characterizing those attitudes and opinions of Agency employees at large.

D. The following tables summarizes the demographic characteristics of the [] respondents to the survey:

TABLE 1

Employee Respondents by Grade Group

GRADE GROUP	QUESTIONNAIRES MAILED	% ON DUTY STRENGTH	% RESPONDENTS
GS-06 and below			
GS-07 and 08			
GS-09 and 10			
GS-11 and 12			
GS-13 thru 15			
SIS Member			
Other Pay Category			

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TABLE 2

Respondent Demographics

CHARACTERISTICS	PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS
Length of Service	
a. Less than two years	8.5
b. Two to four years	12.4
c. Five to ten years	22.8
d. Eleven to twenty years.	35.7
e. More than twenty years.	20.6
Time in Present Position	
a. Less than one year.	32.1
b. One to two years	27.0
c. Two to three years.	13.9
d. Three to five years	13.1
e. More than five years.	13.9
Current Grade	
a. GS-06 and below	10.8
b. GS-07 and 08.	17.3
c. GS-09 and 10.	13.4
d. GS-11 and 12	21.2
e. GS-13 thru 15	30.7
f. SIS	3.5
g. Other Pay Category	2.1
Level of Education	
a. Less than High School Graduate	0.9
b. High School Graduate	23.0
c. Attended Technical, Vocational, Business School	20.3
d. Bachelor's Degree	31.4
e. Advance Degree	24.4
Age	
a. Less than 25.	6.5
b. 25 to 34	28.6
c. 35 to 44	35.6
d. 45 and above	39.3
Sex	
a. Male	64.3
b. Female	35.7

E. One demographic characteristic of special interest is the length of time employees have been in their present jobs. The matter of employee mobility is a subject of interest to management over many years. For the most part the interest relates to whether employees are achieving sufficient broadening; whether they are afforded enough rotational or developmental assignments; and whether cross-Directorate employee movement is too little and too difficult to achieve. The Survey respondents again provide evidence that employees are on the move. While nearly 66 percent of the respondents have been with the Agency over ten years nearly 60 percent have been in their current positions less than two years. In the 1976 Agency-wide personnel management survey 79 percent of the respondents claimed being under their current supervisor less than two years. It was also revealed in the 1976 survey that 61 percent of the Agency's mid-level managers had been in their current positions less than two years. Mention is made of employee mobility because it relates to employee performance appraisal programs, their design and their effectiveness. This will be explored further in the conclusions of this report.

II. The PAR Survey - The Employee's Perspective

A. Validity of Performance Appraisal

1. Survey findings indicate Agency employees have very mixed, even contradictory, feelings about performance appraisal. Although literature on the subject suggests that employees often believe their performance appraisal is based on only parts of their job, the large majority of survey respondents (81%) are satisfied their ratings reflect total job performance. This may be explained in part by the fact that most Agency employees receive favorable ratings and persons receiving favorable ratings are not likely to challenge the basis for such a judgment. In contrast, survey participants were nearly evenly divided on the question of the accuracy of performance ratings. Those respondents assigned to the Executive and DO Career Services show an inclination to be more skeptical than the others. A substantial majority of respondents (69%) believe supervisors give subordinates higher ratings than they deserve. The tendency to this point of view correlates positively with employees' length of service, grade, and age, i.e., the longer employed, the higher in grade, and the older in age, the more likely the employee will believe performance appraisal ratings are inflated. On the other hand, some 39 percent of the respondents contend that supervisors give lower ratings than subordinates deserve. Lower-graded employees, those under 25 years of age, and women are more likely to hold this opinion.

2. Perhaps one of the more significant findings regarding employee attitudes toward the validity of the PAR is that 41 percent of the respondents are not convinced that improvement in their job performance will lead to a higher performance rating. This tendency toward what might be

characterized as cynicism increases with age and relates somewhat to the level of an employee's education. By comparison, data provided in the Federal Employee Attitudes Survey Report (FEAS) published in September 1979, discloses that 55 percent of those surveyed believe there is a tendency for supervisors to give the same performance rating regardless of how well people perform their jobs. The FEAS Report further reveals that 48 percent agree that "financial rewards are seldom related to employee performance," and 56 percent say that it is not at all likely that individuals will be promoted or given better jobs if they perform especially well.

3. One of the major purposes for performance appraisal is to spur employees to improved job performance for which they may anticipate some sort of benefit, albeit in some case the benefit may be simply more job security. Although CIA employees appear, on balance, to have a more positive attitude than other Federal employees on this subject, it is clear that a significant number of employees question whether putting forth the effort to improve their job performance is worth it.

B. The Advance Work Plan (AWP)

1. A majority of respondents (59%) agrees that the AWP is useful. The AWP is supposed to reflect performance goals and priorities that are decided by the employee and supervisor together. More than 53 percent of those surveyed, however, claim they either do not have an AWP, have not participated in its preparation, or if they did participate they did so only to a slight extent. This finding compares with the FEAS statistic showing over 45 percent claiming they and their supervisor do not jointly set performance objectives. Survey data reveals that in the Agency, higher-graded employees and those in NFAC and the DDA are more likely to become involved in the preparation of their AWP's.

2. Less than a majority of respondents (44%) believes the AWP will help to improve the accuracy of their performance ratings. The AWP is supposed to contain performance standards against which employee performance is to be measured. Whether this specific point was being addressed by respondents is unknown but 27 percent say that the AWP does not improve the accuracy of performance ratings. It is quite possible that many AWP's do not contain well written and clear performance standards so employees have no basis to assume that the AWP will serve to enhance the accuracy of performance ratings. The AWP may be too new and employee experience too limited to establish how firm employee attitudes are on this subject.

C. Evaluation of Potential (EOP)

Two-thirds of the respondents believe the EOP provides useful feedback information, and nearly three-fourths believe the EOP to be fair and accurate. It may be that this favorable reaction stems from the possibility that nearly all respondents were given positive feedback. Those

receiving favorable performance ratings often receive positive evaluations as to their potential. These survey results on the value of EOP differ markedly from the results obtained from a survey of Agency personnel evaluation boards and panels. (See Section V)

D. Supervisory Feedback

1. The large majority of respondents (73%) says their performance ratings are consistent with what the supervisor leads them to believe is their level of day-to-day work performance. Nearly 60 percent indicate that at least to some extent their supervisors actually indicate how well they are doing on a day-to-day basis. A somewhat contradictory statistic indicates that only 50 percent are satisfied with the information they receive from their supervisors about their job performance and that they receive this information only on an annual basis (46%). This finding suggests that while favorable performance ratings may, in many instances, ameliorate employee attitudes about the frequency and sufficiency of supervisory feedback, when specifically queried about the matter, however, they appear less satisfied. The message conveyed seems to be that employees want feedback to consist of something more than a good rating level, i.e., the amount of information they receive and the frequency it is given are important also. FEAS results are somewhat comparable. Whereas 57 percent of those Federal employees surveyed claim their supervisors give them adequate information on how well they are performing (this tends to match our survey findings), only 24 percent believe they get feedback for good performance often enough. One might conclude that a good performance, whether sporadic or continuous, does not evoke sufficient complimentary feedback from supervisors.

E. Employee Perceptions of Supervisors

Nearly all respondents (92%) believe they have at least a moderate understanding of what is expected of them, and this perception correlates positively with the age and years of service of the employee. Employee understanding must come from sources other than the supervisor as 31 percent of those surveyed are not prepared to say their supervisors let subordinates know what is expected of them. On the whole however, survey statistics suggest employee attitudes toward their supervisors are distinctly positive, i.e., the supervisor is approachable and communicative (81%); the supervisor is willing to make changes (73%), and makes his or her attitude regarding the employee's job performance clear to the employee (70%); and finally the supervisor treats all subordinates fairly (68%). This statistical data is in contrast to the opinion expressed by the large volume of employees volunteering written comments. They question both the calibre of supervision they receive and the ability of their supervisors to prepare performance appraisals. (See Section IV)

F. The PAR and Comparative Evaluation

Some 82 percent of the respondents believe their performance appraisal rating should determine their comparative evaluation standing. (N.B.--the large majority of Agency employees receive favorable performance appraisals). In this connection nearly all employee respondents (93%) agree that at least to some extent evaluation panels should use information other than their work record to make determinations regarding their ability to assume higher level responsibilities. Employees also strongly endorse the right of appeal when they are dissatisfied with their performance rating (93%), and believe the individual who determines their rating should be held accountable (93%).

G. Employee Satisfaction With the New PAR

1. Those surveyed do not, in the majority, claim satisfaction with the new performance appraisal system. Many respondents remain undecided (37%), but a comparable number claim dissatisfaction (36%). New employees seem more satisfied whereas those at grades 7, 8, and 13 through 15 are least happy with the new system. Again an element of contradiction may be observed, i.e., sixty-three percent of those responding believe the new system yields an accurate picture of their performance, and only 27% clearly prefer a different system. By comparison 49 percent of those included in the FEAS believe their performance ratings are fair and accurate. Many Agency employees (71%) do believe that training in the subject of performance appraisal would improve the overall effectiveness of the appraisal process. The older the employee and the higher in grade the less convinced they are that training would be of much help. Less than a majority of respondents (40%) considers the new system to be an improvement over its predecessor, the "Fitness Report."

2. The new PAR specifically provides for written comments at the option of the employee. Approximately 11 percent of the respondents took the option to comment. Of those that did not, 77 percent either had nothing in particular they wanted to say or assumed if they had a good report they were not expected to offer comments. Nearly 15 percent were concerned that what they might say would be misunderstood or that any critical remarks they wanted to make would create problems for them.

3. Nearly 40 percent of the respondents are either undecided or disagree that their supervisor maintains definite standards of performance. DDA and Executive Career Service employees disagree the most. This concern about standards may reflect employee doubts about whether the supervisor uses an explicit set of criteria against which to measure job performance. This is required under the new PAR system. FEAS results are comparable to ours, i.e., about 40 percent of those surveyed are

either undecided or believe that they have not been aware what standards are used to evaluate their performance, nor are they convinced that the standards used were fair and objective. The matter of job performance standards could be one of the chief reasons that Agency employees seem to have mixed and contradictory attitudes about performance appraisal.

III. The PAR Survey and Agency Supervisors

A. Survey Facts About Supervisors

1. More than 60 percent of the supervisors responding to the survey have at least five years experience. The amount of experience correlates positively with the individual's age and grade. Of the Career Services the DDA supervisors are the most experienced; women supervisors are less experienced than men.

2. The number of supervisors who have attended a formal briefing or workshop on PAR is evenly divided. DDA Career Service supervisors attended in greater numbers than others.

3. Approximately 58 percent of the supervisor respondents prepare PARs on more than three persons.

B. Supervisors and Performance Appraisal

1. The rating tendencies of Agency supervisors are characterized as follows:

a. Nearly 50 percent would rate 20 percent or less of their immediate subordinates at the highest one or two levels of performance (i.e., at the 6 and 7 level of the PAR). In this regard there appears to be a marked difference between SIS level supervisors and those at the GS-13 through 15 level. The former are more inclined to rate a much higher percentage of subordinates at the two highest PAR rating levels.

b. Although the overwhelming majority of supervisors (93%) would rate 20 percent or less of their subordinates at the lowest one or two levels of performance, of the 7 percent who would rate a higher percentage at these levels over one-half are supervisors at the GS-9 through 12 level.

2. The vast majority of supervisors (90%) believes that at least to some extent the typical supervisor would give an employee a more lenient rating to avoid a confrontation. The tendency to this view relates negatively to time on the current job, i.e., the longer the supervisor has been in his or her present position the less they are inclined to believe this to be true.

3. More than 72 percent of the responding supervisors acknowledge that at least to some extent they have difficulty in evaluating a subordinate's potential; women express experiencing more difficulty than men.

4. Nearly one-third of the supervisors believe their immediate superior has little interest in their skill in evaluating subordinates or does not view it as an important element of their job. By comparison only about 20 percent of the Federal employees surveyed under FEAS agree that their supervisor or the organization considers performance appraisal as an important part of the supervisor's duties.

5. Although much of the feedback reflected elsewhere in this report complains of the PAR's length, 71 percent of the supervisors responding believe they have sufficient time in their work schedule to properly evaluate their subordinates.

IV. The PAR Survey-Employees' Written Comments

A. Employees Invited to Share Their Thoughts

Part III of the survey invited participants to write any thoughts or feelings they may have toward the new performance appraisal system. Nearly two-thirds of those who responded elected to comment. There was no attempt to direct employee comments to any particular aspect of the system. Being free to address PAR issues of their own choosing most of those providing written remarks expressed themselves at length with apparent sincerity of purpose and conviction. It was also evident that they had given considerable thought to the subject. Perhaps the most common thread among their comments deals not so much with the performance appraisal system but with Agency personnel evaluation in general and the questionable quality of supervision and management. Many find the calibre of supervision deficient and believe the system to be less important than the skills and competence of supervisors in preparing performance appraisals. Some respondents doubt the ability of supervisors to evaluate employees without bias and without unfair advantage "given the old boy network."

B. Excerpts From Employee Remarks

The following are excerpts from written comments made by survey participants and are offered as being reasonably representative of employee attitudes on the subject of performance appraisal in the Agency. The comments are arranged by selected topic areas and some of the responses have been edited to avoid possible identification of individuals.

General Observations

SIS (Age 45 and above)

--The change from the FR to the PAR was a mistake. It represents bureaucratic over-complication at its worst. It increases the mindless, purely mechanical burden on the rater and the reviewer and contributes almost nothing to an improvement in the substantive input.

GS-13 to 15 (Age 45 and above)

--Too many times the performance appraisal or fitness report is based on personality considerations and friendships etc. -- but more importantly as long as the subordinate does not "make waves" or cause problems for his immediate supervisor, he or she can expect a reasonably good performance rating. If the employee--even with the best of intentions--offers constructive criticism which the supervisor considers a challenge to his authority and position, it will usually result in lower performance ratings. I believe that most employees would be deterred from making any adverse comments in section 4 of the PAR because of the adverse effect it would probably have on their career in the long term. In essence, you can't beat City Hall.

--The new PAR attempts to substitute more sheets of paper for a hard decision: 1) either allow supervisors to contribute additional comments, outside the PAR that employees will not see, in panel meetings where candid comments can be offered or 2) recognize that so long as the employee sees everything written about him/her, few--very few--supervisors have the courage, integrity and tact to describe specific faults and criticize them directly to a person with whom they must continue working on a daily basis.

--I have only been here 1 1/2 years and probably don't understand the problem. However, the entire procedure of PAR, AWP, Review Boards etc. seems to waste a lot of time. The requirement for a system like this one probably exists but couldn't it be simplified to take about a fourth of the time currently required.

--Because of a number of lateral moves by myself and supervisors I have been rated three times in the last year. Based on these ratings and no additional information I could not possibly be recognized as the same person.

GS-13 to 15 (Age 34-44)

--In this Agency, we do not train managers - we promote good performers to management positions as rewards, and expect them to acquire management skills through osmosis. In the case of PAR's, too many folks think about them on the day that they are due, hate like hell to give bad news to anyone, and tend to gloss over problems.

GS-13 to 15 (Age 25 to 34)

--By and large, no sophisticated employee or supervisor takes the appraisal system that seriously. The bottom line is not what the reports say, but who gets promoted to what grades and when. The rest of the system is simply cosmetic.

GS-11 or 12 (Age 34-44)

--I am pleased to have this opportunity to express my feelings on the PAR and personnel policies in general. However, I remain convinced that this exercise like many of the others will do nothing to change the situation. I have looked at personnel problems from three vantage points: the military, private industry, and this organization. I can say without any equivocation that this is the worst of the three. I have witnessed QSIs being awarded for work that was not done, I have seen officers boldly lied to, and I have seen superiors lie and be caught in lies and yet never having to answer for them. I have seen individual officers locked into pedestrian pursuits for the purpose of merely filling an open slot and I have seen the inadequacy of our so called grievance system and the contempt and distrust employees have for the system.

GS-11 or 12 (Age 25-34)

--I don't really see any great change. I believe the individual being rated still is at the mercy of his supervisor.

GS-9 or 10 (Age 45 and above)

--I dislike being totally negative but can see no great changes or improvements evolving from this new system.

Advance Work Plan

SIS (Age 45 and above)

--I find the Advance Work Plan little if any use to me. The AWP cannot be easily applied to positions demanding "creativity" where concepts involving "how much" or "how many" are not applicable.

--The general objective in the AWP states the obvious. The specific objectives are too selective and not that important in terms of all the things I should attend to during the course of the year. It is too much trouble to update the AWP as new problems arise.

--My experience with the panel was that the LOI or AWP or whatever it is called played virtually no role in the deliberations of the panel. It is fadish as one more demonstration of participatory management - the supervisor and the employee working together in tandem - but otherwise of little value.

GS-13 to 15 (Age 45 and above)

--The flaw in the performance appraisal system is, I believe, the use of an AWP. By the nature of the intelligence business flexibility is paramount - an AWP - if followed would often lead to rigidity.

--I would wager that 95 percent of all AWP's are nothing more than glorified job descriptions, and I would further wager that once written, most are filed and forgotten.

GS-13 to 15 (Age 35-44)

--In my view, the AWP should be an internal document -- between the employee and his immediate supervisor. The document could then serve as a document of mutual agreement -- contract or guide, the main problems likely to arise from the AWP stem from its distribution to higher level supervisors, administrative staffs, and comparative evaluation panels.

GS-11 or 12 (Age 45 and above)

--In my present position an accurate AWP is difficult to prepare as daily operational requirements dictate tasks to be performed. In my case the AWP was made with full knowledge that it would not be used. An AWP was needed so one was made up.

GS-11 or 12 (Age 35-44)

--I know what is expected of me because of my familiarity with the work and because it is set forth in office guidelines. My input to the AWP and the only communication on this score from my immediate supervisor was to tell me to "sign here please."

GS-9 or 10 (Age 35-44)

--Feel the AWP would be more useful as an in-office document to establish agreed upon goals between supervisors and employees only.

GS-7 or 8 (Age 25-34)

--The AWP is not written in advance, but is written the same day as the PAR, and is merely a repeat of the duty section on the PAR. I have yet to see one AWP that outlines priorities and goals - most read like a position description.

Evaluation of Potential

SIS (Age 45 and above)

--Evaluation of potential leads to fantasy trips. They are used to "motivate" without really assessing the reality of the potential assignments etc. being discussed.

--The potential section of the PAR is meaningless. No rating/evaluation panel that I know (or Career Service Board) pays the slightest attention to it although they may profess to if queried because they know top-level Agency management wants to hear that.

--Potential section is a mistake - first line supervisors are not the best judges.

--The EOP section seems clearly to be one of those mechanical exercises which has about as much impact on promotion panels as mention of cost effectiveness or EEO.

SIS (Age 35-44)

--I continue to question the usefulness of the Potential statement. Supervisors are not prepared to tell employees they have no potential or are guaranteed a career path through the supergrades. In fewer cases can the supervisors actually articulate the reasons for their judgments.

GS-13 to 15 (Age 35-44)

--The concept of an EOP seems to imply that continuous upward movement is a mandatory state, and that the alternative is tantamount to a stigma. This does not conform to the practical realities of life, where advancement is not always possible because of a variety of institutional circumstances that are beyond the employee's control.

GS-11 or 12 (Age 35-44)

--Biggest problem I have with PAR is the Evaluation of Potential. I find it very difficult to tell someone they have little or no potential. I know of at least one resignation because they had been doing the same job for years and did not want promotions or additional responsibilities and were told they had no potential but that they were doing a good job.

--I am very troubled by the Evaluation of Potential. This is not only because of the subjective nature of the idea itself. There seems to be an area of confusion of terms and a dichotomy of purpose. A careful reading of the form in its entirety and the instructional material for the preparer shows a shift back and forth between "duties" and "responsibilities;" the addition of the qualifier "higher level" within the categories changes the sense of "added responsibility."

GS-9 or 10 (Age 25-34)

--The part that really describes me is the evaluation of my potential. I would hate to think my career rides on the whim of someone who doesn't have the training in evaluation of personnel and doesn't understand this type of evaluation. You can't be serious when you expect rank and file employees to agree with this type of system. You have given a lot of power to people who are not trained and in some cases unfit to make these kinds of evaluations. To sum-up, this new system scares the hell out of me.

Complaints/Personal

GS-13 to 15 (Age 45 and above)

--The reviewer stated I could not write comments after he had written his. He said "I have the last word." My reading of the PA Handbook leads me to believe the employee has the right to write comments after both the rater and reviewer write theirs.

GS-11 or 12 (Age 45 and above)

--As far as performance is concerned office policy states that a four or five rating is average. I have received two reports (within the past six months) using the new appraisal system. On the first report, my supervisor gave me 6's and 7's. The reviewing officer gave me 4's and 5's. On my annual report my new supervisor gave me 4's and 5's following our Director's guidelines. Naturally I believe the first report to be a true rating of my performance.

GS-11 or 12 (Age 35-44)

--In my particular component, the policy has been established that no one is deserving of a 7 evaluation. Therefore, no matter how hard you work and no matter how good a job you do, there is no way you can earn a 7 rating. This really kills incentive.

--Examples of feedback from two supervisors to me:

1. This plan has too many pages.
2. You've done the job perfectly, but only for one year. Therefore, you are rated as a 4. Next year you'll get a 5.
3. I don't need to write a description of what you've done. We all know, and I don't care about others outside my office.

GS-11 or 12 (Age 25-34)

--In my case, in the past year three separate PARs were written (all at the same time) in order to meet the promotion panel deadline one was written ten months after I left that office - another was written to cover a ten month period when I was in training - written by an individual who I had never met and reviewed by another who I also never met. The final PAR was written by an individual for whom I had worked ten days - he also filled out a potential rating.

--On one occasion I had to raise an overall rating because a subpanel had decided this person was in line for a promotion.

GS-7 or 8 (Age 35-44)

--My supervisor used the "new" system to lower all my ratings from previous year because of personnel reasons - telling me everyone was being treated the same - until I found out what my supervisor really did - a P in previous years was not a 3 on new system - I am no longer in the same office.

GS-7 or 8 (Age 25-34)

--I personally have been in grade 9 out of 11 years and see no hope for promotion. Please be advised, this comes after being rated strong/outstanding year after year.

--I don't believe my PAR is fair or accurate in that when one of my supervisors is away, I must fill in completely and take care of his business while he is gone. I am totally responsible for getting his cables out, traces done, replies to Liaison, holding meetings with his liaison contacts, etc.

GS-6 and below (Age 35-44)

--In my new job my performance remains the same, but my new supervisor does not feel anyone, almost without exception, deserves a rating higher than a "5" and has so stated. Consequently, I have one PAR with excellent ratings and comments and another with very average ratings and comments. This can only look strange to someone reviewing my folder for a new position. I considered making a comment in the proper section but was concerned that this would only complicate the matter.

Criticisms/General

SIS (Age 45 and above)

--The form itself has resulted in great inefficiency in thousands of hours of lost time in typing and retyping.

GS-13 to 15 (Age 45 and above)

--I feel there is a decided tendency on the part of us all to avoid confrontation by providing narratives and ratings that employees are willing to accept. This is strengthened by the statement in the PAR Handbook mandating action to resolve areas raised by an employee's rebuttal. Who needs all the hassle involved!

--The new form is more cumbersome than the old, and more complicated to read as well as to fill out. One weakness is that employee signature is separated from the evaluation page, and someday there will be employees who are "sure" that something was added or deleted after they saw their PARs.

--The new appraisal system is more complicated, lengthy, time-consuming and redundant than the former systems. I do not believe it yields a commensurate return in improved management. A simpler system would be better.

GS-13 to 15 (Age 35-44)

--We are continuing to spend an extraordinary amount of time on performance appraisal and not enough time doing our jobs. The paper continues to proliferate; and no visible change takes place in our ability to evaluate people's performance.

GS-11 or 12 (Age 35-44)

--I've perceived an apparently unconscious process whereby relatively early in one's career one is placed into one of two categories - "comers" and "also rans," and having been placed in the latter it appears unusual for the individual to make it into the former. Once again, this process is incompletely reflected in the PA process.

- I feel no security in my position for the future. I am not confident that I know where I'll be and what I'll be doing six months from now - even assuming a high degree of satisfaction by management for my work. Further, I am not confident that future changes will take into account my personal needs, desires, etc. I and a number of my colleagues have indicated to each other that we perceive it to be a great game of chance. That I do not find agreeable.
- The system does not provide specifics as to what the panel should look for in a PAR when evaluating a clerical. Specifically, my subordinate who received "O's" on her last three fitness reports ranked in the low 40% of her grade level although she is superior in all aspects of her job.

GS-11 or 12 (Age 25-34)

- So still a relatively new employee I still don't know what a good appraisal is or what a bad one is. What are the standards? The system is based on comparisons, but what are the standards for comparison? This is my greatest criticism of the current system.

GS-9 or 10 (Age 35-44)

- There are thirteen criteria which must be commented on if you are a supervisor at the GS-12 level in addition to the nineteen criteria which are to be commented on as appropriate. This is difficult to do in a one page narrative especially if outstanding performance is to be commented on with adequate support.

PAR Ratings/Evaluation Panels

SIS (Age 45 and above)

- The old evaluation system (O, S, P, M, W) was more than adequate and should not have been changed. The new rating system is an exercise in bureaucratic nonsense. Offices and Directorates have gone to considerable effort to equate the new numerical ratings with the old "outstanding," "strong," etc. This was mostly caused by lower-level supervisors (i.e., Branch Chiefs) who felt uncomfortable with the new ratings and pressured management to give them guidance on proper numerical ratings that would tie in with the old system.

GS-13 to 15 (45 and above)

- In my opinion, the new PAR system further complicated a cumbersome system which was meaningless to begin with, I don't believe a person can be properly evaluated by number and/or letter grades. My greatest fear in filling out PAR's etc. is what my peers are doing, will they give high ratings thus putting my employees at a disadvantage or will the reverse happen?

GS-13 to 15 (Age 35-44)

- I am outraged at what I consider the hypocrisy in trying to keep staff ratings in the 4-5 category as an indication of doing the job as expected and the ratings awarded to the SIS ranks. I consider it an obvious and flagrant double standard. The fact that inflated ratings are, in general, being

awarded to SIS ranks is proof that this system has been prostituted and means absolutely nothing. In fact, it is an insult. If Agency management expects people like me to take this kind of thing seriously and tear my guts out giving accurate and forthcoming ratings and narratives, then I expect that supergrades do the same.

- The Organization appraisal system is generally ineffective and the source of some discontent. Better not to have such a system and have promotion solely on time in grade, than depend upon a system as ineffective as now being used.
- I believe a major problem in the system falls at the office-level promotion panel comparative evaluations. Panel procedures have not changed with the new system. It is up to the panel, whose members may or may not personally know all the individuals they are ranking, to glean from the ratings and narrative portion of the PAR, all pertinent performance attributes. Using a worksheet of promotion criteria and weights, they take this extracted information and judge the performance of all the candidates for promotion. This tends to bias (positively or negatively) the ranking of individuals known personally by panel members and unfairly leaves the unknown individuals at the whims of how well their supervisors prepared their PAR.
- I am reluctant to apply the ratings in a manner consistent with their definitions. Why? Simply because I have no confidence that other supervisors will and I do not want to penalize my subordinates who are in competition with their peers. Until I am convinced that the highest levels of management are prepared to take a hard line on this matter of inflated ratings and make available the resources to put in an effective control system, I can't give out 4's "from my supervisor" as long as my peers performing at the same level are getting 6's. It's not a question of what I or my subordinates deserve. Rather it is a question of what we deserve relative to our peers.
- It is fairly obvious that a 5 for one rater may be a 6 for another. As far as I can see, there is no guarantee that this problem is taken into consideration by the appraisal panel. Thus, the true appraisal of an individual (with built in biases) is up to the personal familiarity of panel members with the person being appraised. This is the old boy network, which works fine if you are well liked, but is destructive if you are not.

GS-11 or 12 (Age 35-44)

- The name has changed, but the "game" remains the same! We must break away from our subjective approach to evaluating people. The competitive evaluation process will promote those that rate high in their eyes, not who may deserve it. I've set on them. I've seen it happen!

GS-11 or 12 (Age 25-34)

- The problem is and continues to be with the average rating, the new 4, the old P - why must we have one at all? What's wrong with an even number of rating options (4 or 6) so that a person is either above or below average not sitting on the fence and not really knowing where you stand.

- The biggest problem associated with both this and the old system is that a fair yet less than outstanding rating tends to place an employee behind many who are actually no more than his peers.

Suggestions

SIS (Age 45 and above)

- A rather radical departure, which might be tried on an experimental basis, would be to have at least one subordinate, chosen at random, rate each rating officer. I believe the subordinate's reaction to their supervisor definitely reflects the supervisor's skill in supervising and his effectiveness.

GS-13 to 15 (Age 45 and above)

- Supervisors should have their appraisals critiqued periodically (perhaps by OP).
- Your plan is good, your PA Handbook is good -- but now you have to promote its implementation with much more vigor.
- I believe the effectiveness of the PA could be enhanced by an additional section composed of questions keyed to subject's on the job performance on a daily basis. Examples: How does subject perform in a crisis situation? Can subject handle more than one crisis at a time? Subject's effectiveness in briefing superiors on evolving situations for which he is responsible? Does subject think on his feet? Is subject a problem solver?

GS-11 or 12 (Age 35-44)

- The system should not ever revert to one in which only these individuals with 6's down the line will be promoted. If an individual is doing a good job, is qualified and eligible then he should be promoted up to a certain level. (Maybe GS 13/14) Above that level he should have to demonstrate specific qualities above and beyond his normal duties in order to qualify for promotion to high level management positions within the Agency.

GS-9 or 10 (Age 35-44)

- "Seniority" is not a considered factor in our performance appraisal system. I feel that space should be provided to indicate whether an individual may have displayed a strong performance over, perhaps, many years and that this should be given some weight in the PAR.
- I feel that there should be standards set for the entire Agency instead of each directorate being separate.

GS-9 or 10 (Age 25-34)

- The rules and regulations should be such that supervisors should not be allowed to interpret, but to follow the rules strictly.

--It would be helpful for employees to be able to compare their performance with an "average" performance rating of those peers who are promoted by the Career Service panels.

--Penalties should be administered to those supervisors who do not turn in performance appraisals on time. Suggestions: Include the writing of performance appraisals on the rater's performance appraisal. Withhold effective date of promotions, periodic step increases.

GS-9 or 10 (Age 25 and under)

--Perhaps a comment in the narrative should be required stating the most noticeable strength and most noticeable weakness of the rated employee.

--Specific input should be asked for in part 4 (optional employee comments). Besides encouraging the rated employee to actively participate in his performance appraisal, the information obtained could be useful for ongoing indications of specific weaknesses of the PAR system.

--Ratings of specific duties are based on "established standards of performance." If these standards are merely "understood," there may be problems of variance between raters. There appears to be no requirement or instructions for establishing specific standards of performance.

GS-7 or 8 (Age 25-34)

--I think there should be a PAR only for clerical personnel (and a separate one for officers) since the scope and function of their respective jobs are totally different.

--The employee should be able to rate his supervisor also. It should be a two-way street.

GS-7 or 8 (Age 25 and under)

--Since grading is not standardized, each supervisor interpreting the regulations their own way, I feel that the PAR should not be used heavily for promotion and panel considerations. Personality and attitudes towards work should come into play also.

V. Evaluation Board/Panel Assessment of PAR

A. Survey Questions

Information was requested from 130 Career Service personnel evaluation boards and panels. The purpose was to obtain input from those directly involved in the use of the PAR for the comparative evaluation of Agency employees. Each person in charge of an evaluation board or panel was asked to provide answers as detailed as he or she believed necessary to three general issues. When possible their answers were to reflect the collective experience and views of the board or panel. The following information was requested:

a. Compare the new performance appraisal system with the former Fitness Report and describe the ways you feel one is better than the other in serving your needs. Please comment specifically about the usefulness and value of the Evaluation of Potential and the Advance Work Plan for your purposes. Also note any significant shortcomings of the present appraisal system as they effect your function.

b. Identify the information sources (e.g., Performance Appraisals, interviews with supervisors, soft files) you use in your evaluations and the approximate percentage each provides in affecting your decisions. Other than the performance appraisal material, what source has proven to be most valuable and why?

c. In your judgment would additional information on each employee be helpful toward improving the validity of the comparative evaluation process? If so, please describe the kinds of data you feel would be useful (do not concern yourself with the source but rather with the nature of the information).

B. Survey Results

1. Seventy-nine responses were received representing approximately 61 percent of the boards/panels surveyed. All but two of those responding identified their board or panel, and the response level by Career Service was DDA = 69%; DCI = 67%; NFAC = 53%; DDS&T = 47%. The DDO Career Service did not participate (it was verified that the two undesigned responses did not come from the DDO).

2. The responses was sorted, tallied, and analyzed with the following results:

a. PAR vs. FR

(1) PAR better than FR	13%
(2) PAR worse than FR	5%
(3) No difference	44%
(4) No specific comment.	38%

b. Evaluation of Potential

(1) Useful	20%
(2) Not useful*.	56%
(3) Mixed opinion	16%
(4) No specific comment.	8%

*e.g., not useful for GS-10 and below; misleading; should be eliminated; deals with hypothetical situations and unidentified positions; raises false hopes; adds very little information, may be counterproductive; panels do a better job of estimating potential; added element to an already burdened system; redundant; could be placed in the narrative; tends to play too large a role being separated from rest of PAR; contributes least to the ranking process; adds clutter-makes system procedural and bureaucratic; does not serve the employee who rotates frequently; many supervisors do not know how to judge potential; should be done at a higher level than first line supervisor.

c. Advance Work Plan

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| (1) Useful | 26% |
| (2) Not useful*. | 42% |
| (3) Mixed opinion | 19% |
| (4) No specific comment | 13% |

*e.g., not useful, should be eliminated; misused and misunderstood, seems to address duties not priorities or goals; added element of an already burdened system; should be optional; seems contrived; too much paperwork for people who move frequently; useful for SIS only; useful in theory but ineffective; only plays a minor role for panels; a burden and useless exercise, no more successful than LOI; too time-consuming, duplicates duties listed in PAR; mechanical exercise; should be used for remedial situation only; prefer LOI, it's not negotiable; should not be required each year, too much manpower used in writing them.

d. PAR Rating Scale

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| (1) Better than FR | 41% |
| (2) Same (or worse) than FR | 18% |
| (3) No specific comment | 41% |

e. PAR Format and Package

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| (1) Satisfactory | 4% |
| (2) Unsatisfactory*. | 45% |
| (3) No specific comment | 51% |

*e.g., poorly designed, difficult to use; cumbersome; too long-prefer the old forms; more complex-messy; too complicated and involved; a typist's nightmare; too time-consuming; physically bulky; needs simplified-entirely too much material to deal with, signature locations are poor; use of carbons is wasteful.

f. Most Valuable Input Sources

- | | |
|--|-----|
| (1) PAR. | 27% |
| (2) Mixed (unspecified). | 21% |
| (3) Personal knowledge | 19% |
| (4) No specific comment. | 13% |
| (5) Interviews of supervisors. | 12% |
| (6) Comparative Evaluation Rating Form | 4% |
| (7) Files (official and/or soft) | 4% |

g. Need for More Information

- | | |
|------------------|-----|
| (1) No | 47% |
|------------------|-----|

- (2) Yes* 28%
(3) No specific comment 25%

*e.g., more information offered--from employees; additional oral input; data on initiative and other employee traits; work-sheet by higher level panel; improved files; employee self-assessment; information which does not have to be shown employee; supervisor's input on specific ranking criteria; improved files and training records; information on employee's leave record, security violations, etc, rating scorecard on supervisors; reliable personal statistics of individual employees that can be quickly retrieved through the computer.

C. Board/Panel Comments and Suggestions

Many of the boards and panels offered comments and suggestions about the performance appraisal system. No unanimity exists either within or among the panels as to actions which should be taken to improve the appraisal process. The following are selected excerpts taken from panel responses. They are offered as being illustrative of the diversity of attitudes Agency officials have on this subject:

- ten rating levels would be better.
- put common elements (e.g., cost consciousness, security consciousness, EEO, etc.) in a check type matrix on the PAR form.
- distribute rating statistics to Agency components, help managers see trends and be more consistent.
- it is difficult to evaluate people on the written record alone.
- question need to report items 1 through 12 of Section A. (deals with header information)
- require rater to weigh certain positive and negative traits.
- require the employee to evaluate the rater's evaluation.
- supervisors should be required to comment on evaluation factors used by panels in the PAR itself.
- a statistical method of making comparisons may be more equitable than a panel system.
- other characteristics in addition to potential should be evaluated.
- formal training is needed for supervisors.

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- provide for the employee who is not interested in assuming more responsibility.
- recommend use of a short form for promotions, TDY, short reassignments and other types of interim periods.
- reduce 7 level system to 5 levels (eliminate #6 and #2).
- panels should be obliged to write a brief statement on each employee highlighting its judgment on the individual's value to the service and this should be tied back to the PAR.
- limit the number of words permitted in the PAR narrative.
- PAR should be more closely tied to comparative evaluation factors.
- It is unlikely any PAR system will approach the fairness, frankness, or solicitude necessary to do the job well.

VI. PAR Cost Effectiveness

A. Computer Generated PAR

When the new PAR system was implemented component personnel officers throughout the Agency were asked to request those responsible for handling and typing large numbers of PARs to observe, over an extended period, the time consumed in PAR preparation. The fact is that, by design, the identifying data for each employee's annual PAR (Section A) was computer generated to facilitate its preparation.

B. Comments of Personnel Officers

1. In responding, perhaps the word most frequently used by personnelists to describe the handling of the PAR was "cumbersome." The new system involves more pages than the former Fitness Report, and in addition interleaved carbons were found to be difficult to handle. The computer generated preparation of Part A was well received, but only when coupled with the suggestion that it be limited to the original copy. The other required copies should be reproduced from the original. Personnel officers also reported they had received many complaints from employees having difficulty in locating the required signature lines in the form.

2. With the greatly increased amount of paper, and the additional time which the many persons involved have to invest in the PAR's preparation, the new system costs more in time and money than the old. The bulk of the PAR package and the use of carbons simply nullified any cost benefits anticipated through the use of the computer.

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VII. Review of Completed PARs

A. The PAR Sample and Review Objectives

The evaluation of the new PAR system included in its design a first-hand examination of a random sampling of nearly 10 percent of all incoming PARs received during the course of 1980. A total of 1,317 PARs were examined focusing on: 1) the use of the employee comments section; 2) the use of the EOP section; and 3) the length of the narrative section (raters had been admonished in the PAR Handbook to limit their remarks, where possible, to the space provided). Other observations were noted by the reviewers but no tally was made. e.g., absence of required signatures, errors in the required period of coverage, failure to submit AWP, etc. Those reviewing the PARs anticipated that initially many minor problems or errors would be found characteristic of the start up of a new system. As a matter of routine the Office of Personnel inspects all performance appraisals to ensure they are properly signed, etc. for record purposes.

B. Results of the PAR Review

1. During the briefing sessions held at the time of the PAR's introduction, it became apparent that some supervisors believe that giving employees the option of commenting would serve, among other things, to encourage criticism and confrontation. Only four percent of the PARs reviewed (61 employees) utilized the comments section. Of that figure, 18 could be categorized as basically concurring with the supervisor's comments, 20 were in the nature of self appraisal (statements regarding the current job, plans for future assignments or training) and 23 were confrontational. At the present time only a small number of employees use this section and it is not a significant vehicle for confrontation between subordinates and their bosses.

2. Concern had been expressed that supervisors would refuse to commit themselves on the EOP part of the PAR, and would claim that "the assignment during the rating period did not offer (them) the opportunity to evaluate readiness to assume higher level responsibility. Employee is rendering a valuable contribution." Little more than 6 percent of the supervisors selected this option and a lesser number stated that the employee concerned lacked the capability of assuming higher level responsibility. The reviewers allowed for the possibility that many supervisor-subordinate relationships were new and that insufficient time had transpired to enable a fair evaluation to be made on this question. It was observed, however, that in some instances a supervisor remained unwilling to commit him or herself on an employee's potential after supervising the employee from four to eight years. It is difficult to understand why, given such lengths of time, a supervisor still feels unable to comment on a subordinate's potential for development when limited to the area for which the subordinate is being rated.

3. The PAR package was designed so that most raters would find they could limit their narrative comments to the space provided. The Performance Appraisal Handbook stressed this point because the now obsolete Fitness Report invariably required additional paper which the new system hoped to avoid. However, supervisors wrote comments well beyond the bounds of the space provided in more than 50 percent of the PARs reviewed.

VIII. PAR Rating Scale Statistics

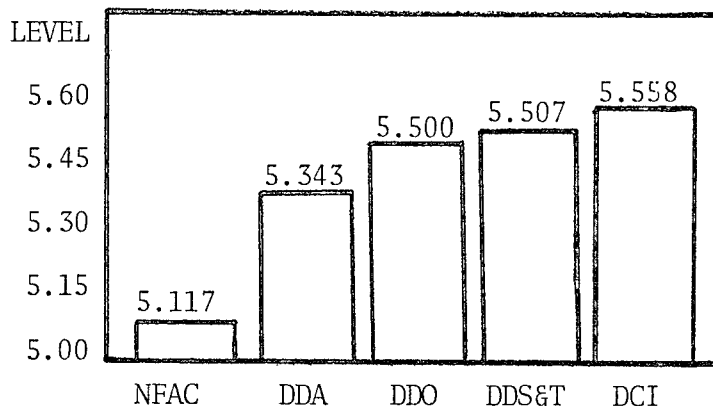
Employee rating levels under the new PAR system remain comparable to those of the Fitness Report. The average rating of a sample of [] PARs submitted in 1980 is 5.39. Statistically, there is no significant difference in the level of ratings under the two systems. (A statistical analysis comparing the rating levels of FY 1979 and FY 1980 supports this finding - see addendum). One of the main expectations held for the PAR was that a significant reduction would occur in the average employee performance rating level - this has not happened. There is evidence, however, that significant differences in PAR rating levels do exist among the Career Services. Table 3 shows this difference.

25X1

TABLE 3

Career Service Average Rating Level

Performance Appraisal Report



Less than two percent of the PARs submitted during 1980 had over-all ratings below the 4 level. The differences among the Career Services at the 4 and above levels are shown in Table 4 where I = NFAC, M = DDA, R = DDS&T, D = DDO, and E = DCI.

TABLE 4
Career Service Rank PAR Levels 4 through 7

RANK	4	5	6	7
1	I (24%)	I (38%)	E (51%)	E (9%)
2	M (15%)	M (36%)	D (49%)	R (8%)
3	R (12%)	D (34%)	R (47%)	D (7%)
4	E (11%)	R (32%)	M (42%)	M (5.3%)
5	D (9%)	E (26%)	I (31%)	I (5.1%)

NUMBER IN SAMPLE	
	25X1

Although the percentage difference in many cases is small, it is apparent that the M and I Services rate employees lower on the average than the others. Table 5 shows how consistent the I Service is at all but the GS-3 grade level.

TABLE 5
Career Service PAR Rankings by Grade*
GS-3 through SIS

RANK	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	SIS
1	I	R	E	E	E	E	E	E	R	R	R	R	E	E
2	M	E	R	R	D	D	D	M	E	M	M	E	M	R
3	E	M	M	D	R	R	M	D	M	E	E	M	R	M
4	R	D	D	M	M	M	R	R	D	D	D	D	D	D
5	D	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I

TIE

*Highest rating level ranks first

The D Service average rating level ranks second or third among the Career Services (see Tables 3 and 4) but drops to fourth in Table 5 in grades GS-11 through SIS. It would appear that special effort has been made to lower ratings at these grade levels, but the evidence is not very strong.

Since rating levels are generally lower in NFAC than the other Career Services, the employee survey data was reprocessed to compare the attitudes of those in the "I" Service with those elsewhere in the Agency. Few meaningful differences were noted. Examples of some of the comparative responses are:

--New PAR is better than old Fitness Report.

"I" Service = 34% (agree)
Others = 41% (agree)

--Performance ratings are accurate.

"I" Service = 47% (agree)
Others = 50% (agree)

--Do you believe supervisors give higher ratings than deserved?

"I" Service = 42% (yes)
Others = 51% (yes)

--Do you believe supervisors give lower ratings than deserved?

"I" Service = 9% (yes)
Others = 14% (yes)

--Would you prefer a different performance evaluation system?

"I" Service = 26% (yes)
Others = 27% (yes)

The evidence as presented in the statistical analysis attached as an addendum to this report positively correlates rating level with grade, i.e., the higher one's grade the higher one's rating level. This grade-rating relationship also shows in occupational subcategories. The percentage of professional employees receiving a 4 or 5 level rating is lower than that of clericals, technical, and wage board employees; it is the highest of the four groups at the 6 and 7 rating levels. (See Table 6) The grade-rating relationship for employees at the GS-7 and 8 levels is higher and out of pattern when compared with the other grades. For three of the five Career Services the average rating level of GS-7 and GS-8 employees exceeds that found in grades 3 through 11. The explanation may be that at these grade levels certain occupations have nearly peaked e.g., secretaries (they represent 12 percent of the Agency population at these grade levels). The correlation of grade to rating level could still apply, i.e., the ratings of employees at the top grade level of a given occupational series are higher than those at the entry grade level.

TABLE 6

Occupational Sub-Category Rankings*

PAR Levels 4 through 7

RANK					25X1	
	4	5	6	7	NUMBER IN SAMPLE	
1	W (26%)	W (44%)	P (49%)	P (7%)	Prof. =	
2	C (19%)	T (40%)	C (36%)	C (7%)	Cler. =	
3	T (19%)	C (35%)	T (35%)	T (3%)	Tech. =	
4	P (10%)	P (33%)	W (26%)	W (2%)	Wg.Bd. =	
	4	5	6	7		
	LEVEL					

*Highest rating level ranks first

IX. Discussion and Conclusions

A. The PAR System - An Improvement?

1. It is patently clear that the new Agency PAR system, as currently used, is no better than its predecessor. Employee rating levels remain essentially the same; employee criticism of the performance appraisal process continues to be strong; and the PAR's utility for making personnel management decisions is still not fully satisfactory.

2. The results of this evaluation disclose that the new PAR system's introduction in the Agency was not very effective. For the most part supervisors were not primed sufficiently to handle the requirements of the new system. Although in some respects the differences from the old system were not significant, in fact a rather new concept was being introduced. It is difficult to determine whether the evaluation findings reflect mostly on the system or on the manner in which it is presently being applied. Since nearly half of the supervisors participating in the survey claim they have not received a formal briefing or workshop on the subject of the new PAR, it is understandable that problems exist in its use. Large numbers of supervisors had been briefed on the PAR system prior to its implementation in the Fall of 1979; apparently, this was inadequate. In making the transition from the old system to the new it appears that many supervisory employees made two major errors. They assumed first that the numerical rating scale of the PAR was directly related to the letter ratings of the old Fitness Report. Supervisors sought to determine what an "S" rating on the old system represented on the new. A deliberate effort was made by some managers to assist in this process.

They established conversion tables. Managers failed to perceive the need to disregard the old system entirely in arriving at rating decisions and to focus on the new. The PAR was to be a fresh start; employee ratings were to be determined through the application of a new tool, i.e., the AWP. The second major error occurred when many supervisors assumed that the AWP was a re-labeled Letter of Instruction (LOI), a form which has been discontinued. Again, they missed the point. The AWP, mutually arrived at by the supervisor and subordinate, is to contain performance standards to be used to identify the employee's performance appraisal ratings. The evidence is substantial that few supervisors used the AWP as intended.

3. The evaluation findings indicate that the EOP is not serving a meaningful function in the PAR program. Supervisors, in particular, find it of such limited value that they question the need for its continued use. Many employees agree that one's immediate supervisor is not always the best source for assessing an employee's potential. Higher echelon managers and/or panels are viewed as better prepared to make this determination. In addition, supervisors admit to experiencing some difficulty in making this assessment.

4. Perhaps one of the most frequently expressed concerns about the new PAR system is the form itself. The consensus is that it requires more of everyone's time to complete. It has been described as a secretary's "nightmare." Unquestionably, the AWP and the EOP have suffered to some extent because they represented an added burden to an already lengthened form. The use of carbons in the PAR proved to be a mistake. Photocopying has become so commonplace that many typists are unprepared to handle carbons, at least with any efficiency. Action should be taken before new PAR forms are ordered to simplify the format. Many complain and have problems in locating the signature lines in the form. This difficulty added to a sense of frustration which many employees experienced in completing the PAR.

B. Problems in Performance Appraisal

1. Traditionally, performance appraisal systems have been touted as the means to address and effect decisions on such matters as employee productivity, development, advancement and/or separation. The difficulty is that performance appraisals thought to be useful for more than one objective often are not. For example, an organization with a high ratio of superior employees would find it difficult to use this tool as a primary means of selecting individuals for advancement. The new PAR system was introduced in large part, because it was presumed that an appraisal system with newly defined rating levels would discriminate better among employees and make it a more useful tool for personnel evaluation boards and panels. Employees strongly agree that performance appraisals should be considered at the time promotion decisions are being made. This is understandable particularly in instances where the employees' appraisals are highly complimentary. When employees receive "complimentary" performance appraisals, they believe themselves to be competitively strong and naturally harbor increased expectations for advancement. However, employees have come also

to appreciate that a "strong" work performance record does not guarantee career advancement. The fact is that considerable variance exists among Agency personnel evaluation boards and panels both in the weight they give the PAR and in the nature and kinds of data they use in making their rankings.

2. Another factor which tends to complicate the performance appraisal process is the high frequency of employee reassignments. The movement of employees via reassignment within and among Agency components continues at a fairly high rate. As indicated previously, nearly two-thirds of those surveyed in this study have been in their job two years or less. Although employee transfers are a normal part of career development, frequent employee movement can serve to complicate the performance appraisal process, particularly where supervisors are involved. Employees are especially concerned with the fact that rating level "performance standards" are highly subjective and vary among supervisors, i.e., one supervisor may credit an employee with a "5" level rating whereas another would describe the same performance at the "6" level. Supervisory officials are responsible for establishing performance standards regardless of the amount of subordinate participation in their development. At the present time when supervisors are moved, the frame of reference (standards) for judging employee performance moves along with them. The credibility of the performance appraisal process suffers when these standards change frequently. In this regard, there is serious question in the minds of many employees that supervisors apply standards at all. As perceived by employees, the highly subjective manner in which supervisors assess the quality of a subordinate's work performance is by far the most serious element undermining their confidence in the system.

C. The Basic Question - What to do?

1. Fred C. Thayer in an article in Public Personnel Management Journal quotes from John Kenneth Galbraith's speech to the Foreign Service:

"I would urge your organization to look with concern on any administrative device that encourages obeisance and bootlicking rather than independent expression and behavior. I have in mind especially the efficiency report. This device.... accords to the superior in an organization far too much power over both the manners and thought of his subordinates.... Co-workers and subordinates often are in a far better position to judge a man's competence and his capacity for leadership than his boss."¹

¹Fred C. Thayer, "Civil Service Reform and Performance Appraisal: A Policy Disaster," Public Personnel Management Journal, VOL. 10, No. 1, 1981, P. 25.

This is but one of the sources Mr. Thayer quotes in presenting his thesis that "... performance appraisal systems do not and cannot possibly work."² He considers the renewed effort by the Federal Government to implement a performance appraisal system based on "merit" as impossible to achieve. The results of this study of the Agency's new PAR tends to support this view. The sad fact is that many Agency employees have given up hope for an equitable performance appraisal system. Remarks such as "Don't replace (the PAR); it will just result in something worse," or "By and large, no sophisticated employee or supervisor takes the appraisal system that seriously" reveal the cynicism of the individual employee on this subject.

2. Mr. Thayer says that from his own lengthy experience, he has found most employees believe their supervisors have no reasonable basis for evaluating their performance. He says "Since superiors cannot possess the requisite performance-based knowledge (for making employee evaluations) they have no alternative but to retreat to the use of person-based factors."³ From there Mr. Thayer says it is but a short step from person-based evaluation to "political" evaluation. He quotes from Victor A. Thompson's book a Modern Organization "... despite the attempted quantification with formal performance rating schemes.... The crucial questions are not merit and ability in the ordinary sense, but the compatibility and loyalty of the newcomers from the standpoint of the existing management team. Is he our kind?"⁴

3. The observation of Mr. Thompson's is akin to what Agency employees refer to as "the old boy network." Few employees seem comfortable with performance appraisal and from Mr. Thayer's perspective "... the periodic need to be evaluated from above and evaluate those below ... is an experience one attempts to conclude as quickly as possible in the hope it can then be forgotten. Every supervisor and every subordinate is scarred by each such experience."⁵ Should this, in fact, represent Agency employee attitudes toward performance appraisal its effectiveness as a program is seriously impaired. This study does establish that employees are, for the most part, interested in performance appraisal working as it is intended to work. They support the need for more training on the subject and recognize that certain improvements (e.g., objective performance standards) are difficult to achieve. The need to evaluate work performance remains and the challenge is to develop better and more acceptable ways of doing it.

X. Recommendations

1. It is important that changes to the system be made carefully, and with full appreciation of the fact that there is no panacea. Much work

²Ibid., P. 21

³Ibid., P. 21

⁴Ibid., P. 24

⁵Ibid., P. 26

is being done at the present time on the subject throughout the Federal Government and we should exercise some patience in hopes of sharing the insights and potential benefits which might be realized. We, of course, should continue to seek our own answers to our problems with the confidence that we will succeed in accomplishing our goals of increasing employee support for the Agency's performance appraisal program.

2. Certain actions should be taken in the meanwhile to strengthen the present system (which is still new) as study continues on the subject. The following is recommended:

- a. Modify and simplify the PAR format (eliminate the use of carbons);
- b. Discontinue the use of the EOP;
- c. Retain the AWP for record purposes in the component soft file not in the Official Personnel Folder;
- d. Increase the emphasis on performance appraisal skills in managerial training courses;
- e. Require supervisors to comply with HN 20-991, dated 23 February 1981, which focuses attention on the need to develop explicit work performance standards at the "4" level of performance.

ADDENDUM

INVESTIGATION OF PERFORMANCE

APPRAISAL RATINGS

Purpose of Study. Although the new performance rating system is different in many respects relative to the previous system, one of the primary differences is the evaluation of performance on a seven (7) point continuum rather than on a five (5) point continuum. Further, the seven (7) point scale is based on numerical values ranging from one to seven; the five (5) point scale is based on verbal values ranging from "unsatisfactory" to "outstanding". Since the performance ratings (PR) for FY 1980 were obtained using the seven point scale, a comparison of the 1980 PR distribution with the 1979 PR distribution would emphasize the similarities or differences between the two rating scales.

A more general approach to comparing the two PR distributions is the use of analysis of variance. By means of analysis of variance it is possible to determine the effect of various factors on PR. For the purpose of this study, the effects of Grade, Directorate Career Service, and Sub-Category are selected for evaluation.

Determination of the effects of these factors on the PR distribution for FY 1980 relative to the effects of the same factors on the 1979 PR distribution indicates how the performance appraisal system has been affected by the introduction of new performance appraisal procedures such as the seven point scale. Thus, this second approach to the study of the performance appraisal system

allows for a more detailed understanding of performance evaluation. Not only is it possible to indicate whether the two PR distributions differ but further to know what factors contribute to the difference or non-difference. Hence, the factors which affect PR can suggest the underlying cause of the behavior in the PR distributions.

Comparison of Rating Distributions. In order to compare the 1980 ratings which are on a seven point scale with the FY 1979 ratings, it is necessary to transform the seven point scale to a five point scale. Recoding of the 1980 seven point scale is as follows:

Seven-Point Scale	Transformed Scale
1	1
2	2
3 & 4	3
5 & 6	4
7	5

This simple transformation doesn't have any serious affect on the overall shape of the distribution, but merely allows the weighted average ratings to be directly contrasted.

The mean or average rating for FY 1980 is 3.89 and the average for FY 1979 is 3.94. From Figure 1* the overall shape of the two distributions are essentially identical. The most distinct feature of Figure 1 is that the majority of employees (approx. 70%) are rated as a four on a five point scale.

*See Appendix for all Figures and Tables.

Chi-square tests confirm the major feature of Figure 1 (see Table I). From Table I it is apparent that the overall shape of the PR distributions are not significantly different. The only finding of significance in Table I is that the DCI career service has changed from 1979 to 1980. The change in the distributions shape is due to the shift in fewer employees being rated as fives in 1980.

Analysis of Covariance. From previous studies¹ it has been found that the position a person holds has a significant relationship to the performance rating. In our data files one of the most accessible variables to an employee's hierarchical positions within the Agency is the Grade at the time of the performance evaluation. Thus, the first question of interest is if there is a relationship between the PR and Grade. When the weighted average for each grade is plotted (see Figure 2), the average PR increases as a function of grade. The degree to which this association holds is moderately high ($r = 0.44$).

In relation to this association between PR and Grade, it is interesting to determine how the factors of career service^C and sub-category affect the PR. The computation of the average PR for each career service shows that the NFAC career service is lower on the whole than any of the other career services. Further, the DCI and DDO are on the whole rated slightly higher than any of the other career services. The analysis of covariance shows this affect

¹ See Annual Review of Psychology (1979) for article on Recent Research on Personnel Selection & Evaluation.

quite clearly and shows that it holds for FY 1980 and FY 1979. Figure 3 shows the average PR for each grade plotted separately for the five career services. As can be seen, the effect of grade is very prevalent; however, the strict linear trend is complicated by the various career services. In other words, the rate of change in PR from grade to grade does not remain constant for the five career services as the analysis of covariance confirms.

The final factor to be discussed is the effect of sub-category on the PR. There are three sub-categories--clerical, technical and professional. When the average PR is computed for each category, it is found that professionals are rated slightly higher than clericals or technicals. However, it should be noted that the average grade for professionals is higher than clericals or technicals and the higher grade could be what is contributing to the higher PR. One method of controlling for the effect of grade is to determine the average PR for employees from grade 4 to grade 11. This restricted sample was investigated and the average PR for clericals and professionals are approximately equal; however, the average grade of professionals is grade 9, whereas clericals is grade 6. These results are counter to the PR and grade relationship which states that as grade increases the PR increases. This lack of a difference between the sub-categories is most likely due to the greater amount of experience for the clerical employees (e.g., senior secretaries). Thus, the effect of sub-category is not straight forward, as can be seen in Figure 4. The concomitant effects of grade and length of experience most likely have a significant interaction with sub-category. From the analysis of covariance,

as with the career service effect, the concomitant variable of grade interacts significantly with sub-category. Hence, the PR determined for each sub-category is dependent on the grade of the sub-category.

Implications of Results:

1. The first issue of concern is the comparability between the seven and five point scales. It is quite evident that increasing the range of the rating scale has had no significant effect on the shape of the PR distribution (see Figure 1 and Table I).
2. The factors of grade, job-category, and directorate career service have a significant relationship to the average PR. The exact relationship between grade and PR is predominantly linear and its effect is quite strong given that it is present in all career services and sub-categories (see Figures 2, 3, and 4 and the ANOVA results). The exact relation of PR to the other two variables isn't as easy to determine. The primary reason is that grade is such a powerful effect and its relation with PR changes very subtly between career services and sub-categories. However, it is possible to say that on the average certain career services are rated higher and that certain sub-categories are rated higher.
3. The main implication of all these results is that employees are not rated only on their past performance; rather, the grade, sub-category and career service play important parts in determining their PR. These findings are very interesting in light of that fact that the new evaluation system has an advanced

work plan and that performance ratings should be relative to the advanced work plan.

4. The final implication is that since employees are being rated based on the same factors (e.g., grade, career service, etc.), the overall shape of the distribution has not changed from FY 1979 to FY 1980. Further, the entire rating scale is not used because the factors of grade and career service have such a significant effect on PR. Thus, the entire range of the rating scale will never be used until the correlation of PR with other variables is reduced.

APPENDIX

TABLE I

CONTINGENCY TABLE WHICH CONTRASTS
THE PERFORMANCE RATINGS FOR
FY 1980 AND FY 1979

AGENCY	<u>Ratings</u> Percent Occurrence					Chi-Square
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	
1980	0.0	0.2	16.7	76.8	6.3	3.13
1979	0.1	0.2	17.6	70.5	11.6	
DDO						
1980	0.0	0.1	10.8	82.5	6.5	7.31
1979	0.0	0.1	8.0	75.7	16.1	
DCI						
1980	0.2	0.2	9.7	75.7	14.3	12.78*
1979	0.1	0.2	9.2	60.0	30.5	
NFAC						
1980	0.0	0.4	26.7	68.0	5.0	4.67
1979	0.0	0.3	34.9	57.6	7.5	
DDA						
1980	0.0	0.1	17.4	77.5	5.0	3.85
1979	0.1	0.2	16.4	72.3	11.0	
DDS&T						
1980	0.1	0.2	13.5	78.4	7.9	1.69
1979	0.1	0.3	18.0	72.7	8.8	

*At $p < .05$ $\chi^2 = 9.4877$

FIG. 1 PERFORMANCE RATING FREQUENCY
BY FISCAL YEAR

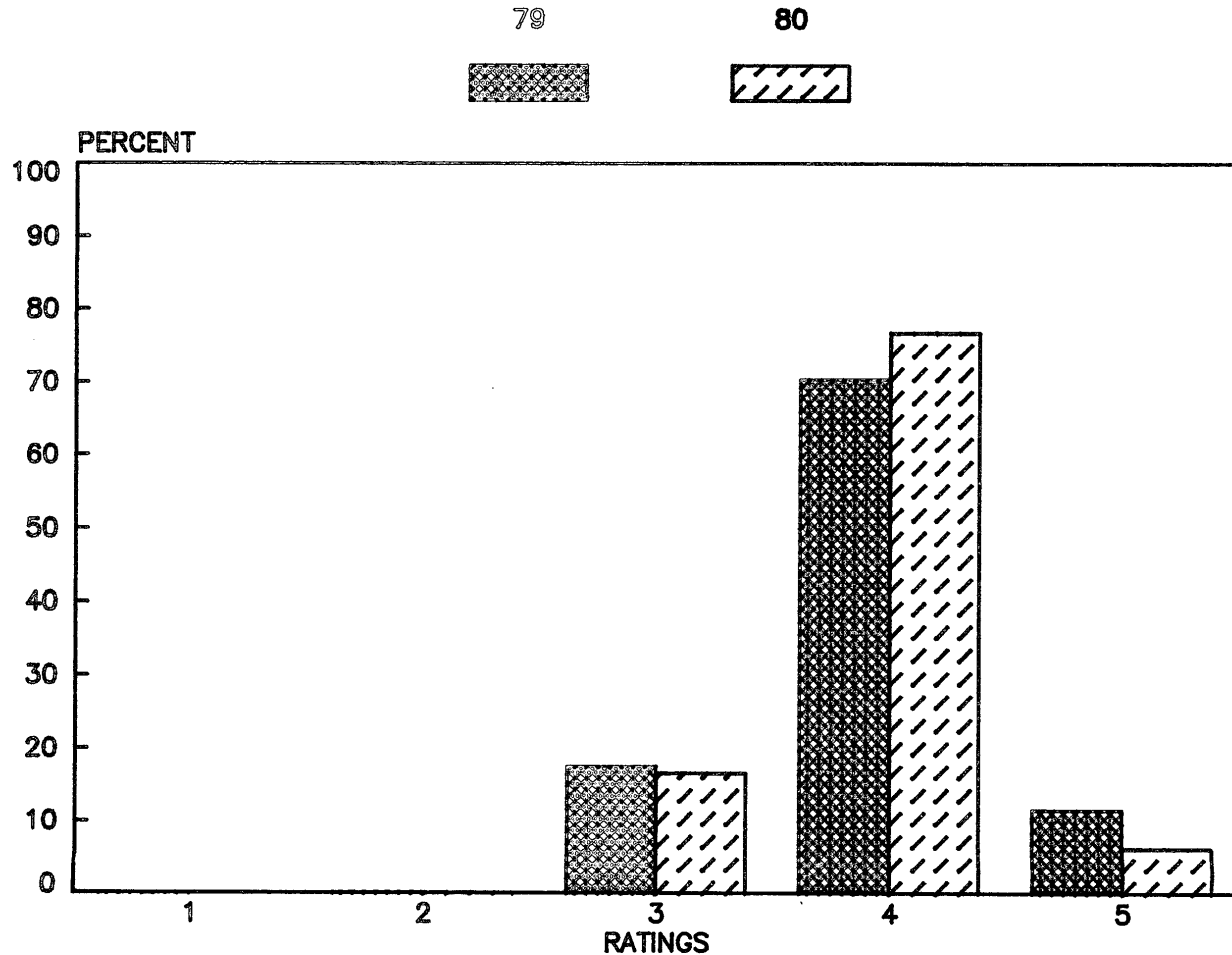


FIG. 2
PERFORMANCE RATING V. GRADE

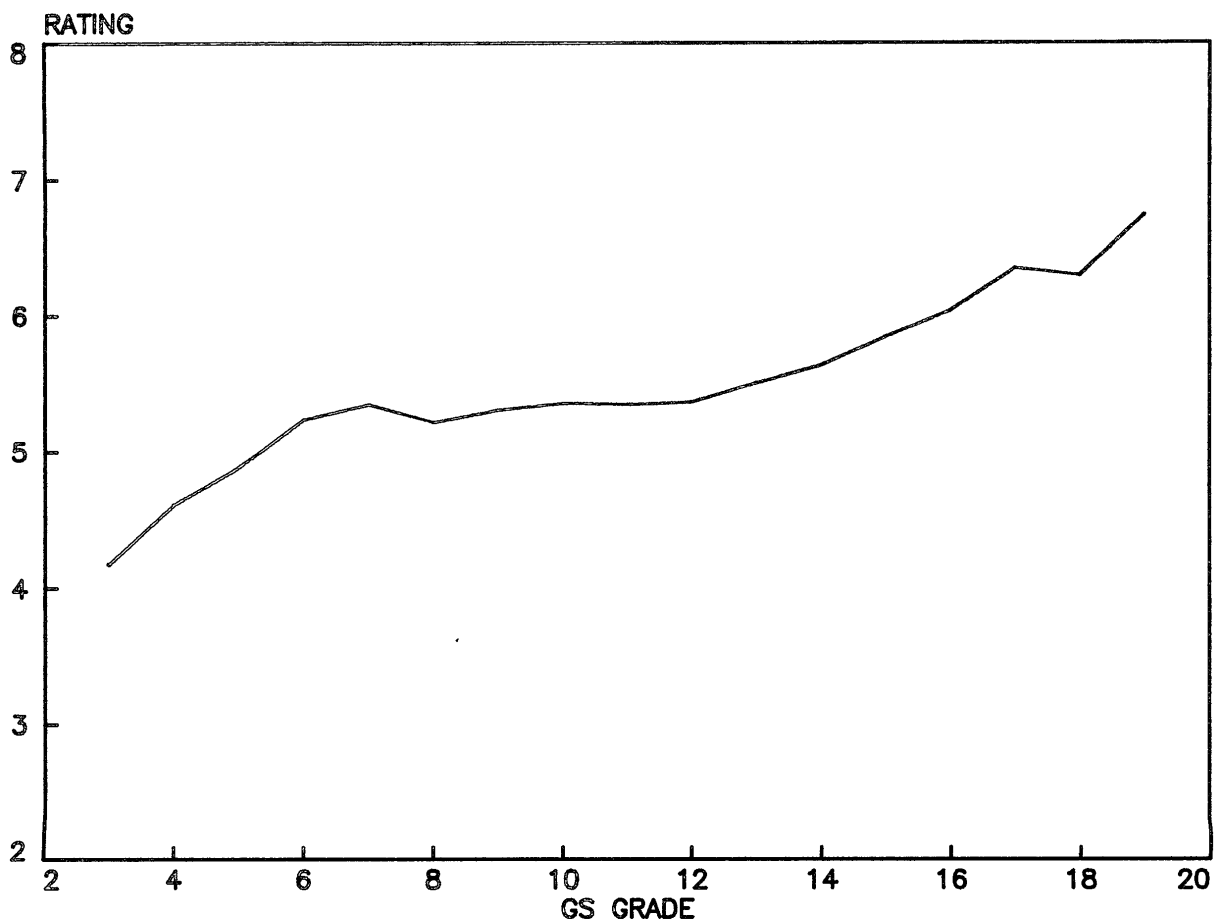


FIG. 3 PERFORMANCE RATING V. GRADE
BY CAREER SERVICE

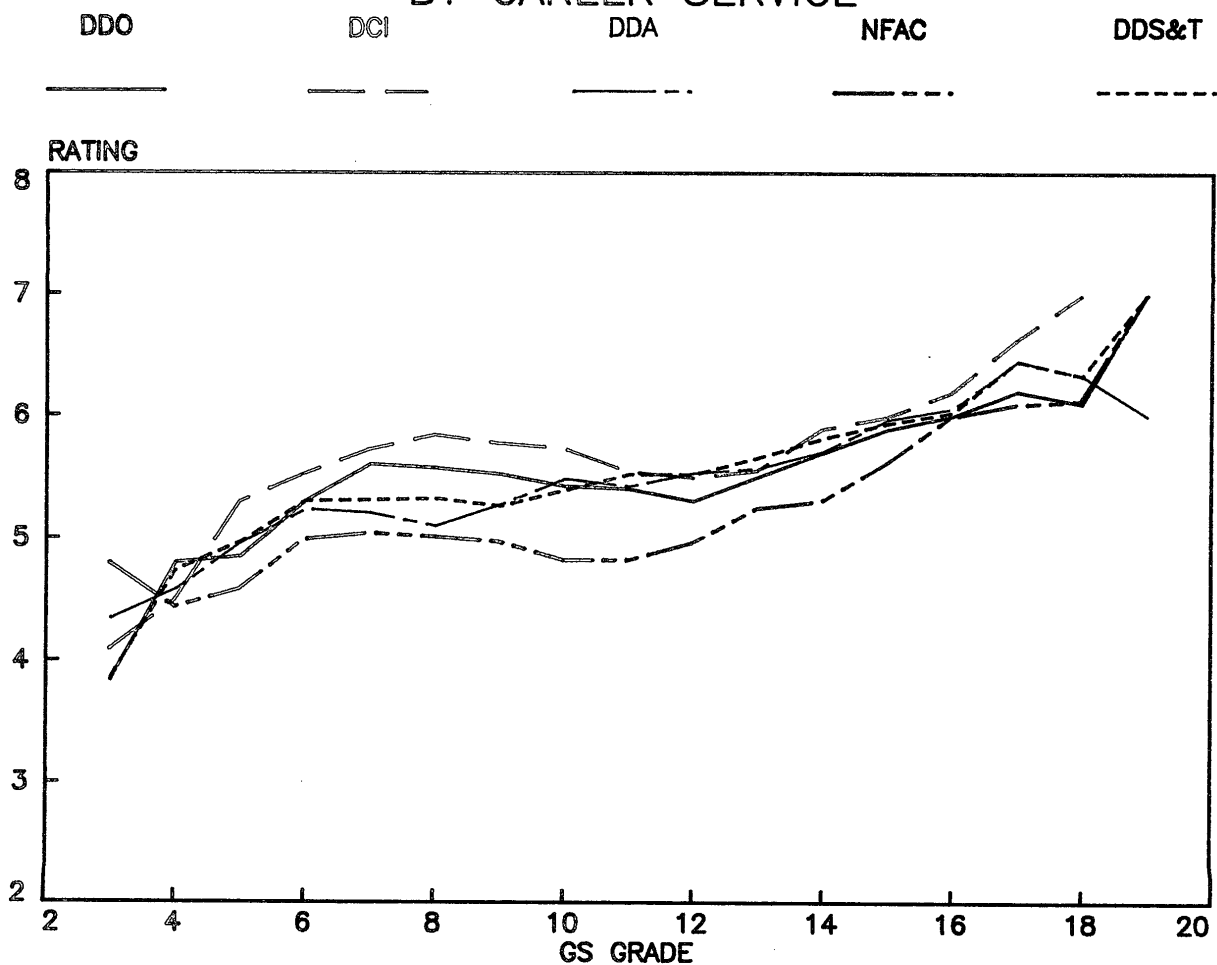
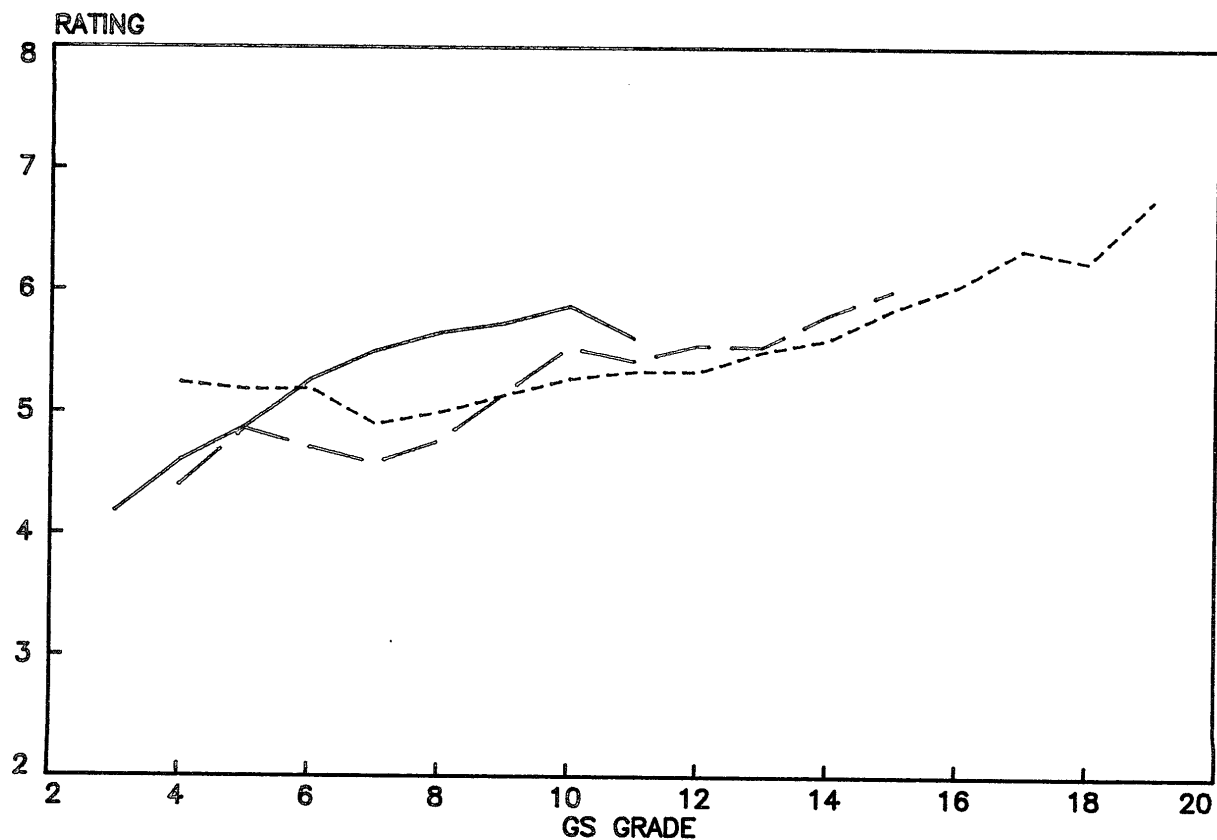


FIG. 4 PERFORMANCE RATING V. GRADE
BY CLERICAL TECHNICAL AND PROFESSIONAL



ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE
PERFORMANCE RATINGS OBTAINED IN FY 1980
ANALYSIS PERFORMED ON ENTIRE POPULATION
S=1=CAREER SERVICE AND JOBCAT=SUB-CATEGORY

GENERAL LINEAR MODELS PROCEDURE

CLASS LEVEL INFORMATION

CLASS	LEVELS	VALUES
S=1	5	D E I N R
JOBCAT	3	C P T

NUMBER OF OBSERVATIONS IN DATA SET = 16712

25X1

Approved For Release 2005/12/14 : CIA-RDP92-00420R000400040001-5

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ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE
PERFORMANCE RATINGS OBTAINED IN FY 1980
ANALYSIS PERFORMED ON ENTIRE POPULATION
SD1=CAREER SERVICE AND JOBCAT=SUB-CATEGORY

GENERAL LINEAR MODELS PROCEDURE

DEPENDENT VARIABLE: RATING

SOURCE	DF	TYPE IV SS	F VALUE	PR > F
GRADE(SD1*JOBCAT)	7	21.90569009	4.85	0.0001

NOTE: OTHER TYPE IV TESTABLE HYPOTHESES EXIST WHICH MAY YIELD DIFFERENT SS.

25X1

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ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE
PERFORMANCE RATINGS OBTAINED IN FY 1980
ANALYSIS PERFORMED ON GRADES 4 THRU 11

GENERAL LINEAR MODELS PROCEDURE

CLASS LEVEL INFORMATION

CLASS	LEVELS	VALUES
DD1	5	D E I M R
JOB CAT	3	C P T

NUMBER OF OBSERVATIONS IN DATA SET = 9815

25X1

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ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE
PERFORMANCE RATINGS OBTAINED IN FY 1980
ANALYSIS PERFORMED ON GRADES 4 THRU 11

GENERAL LINEAR MODELS PROCEDURE

DEPENDENT VARIABLE: RATING

NOTE: OTHER TYPE IV TESTABLE HYPOTHESES EXIST WHICH MAY YIELD DIFFERENT SS.

25X1

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ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE
PERFORMANCE RATINGS OBTAINED IN FY 1979
ANALYSIS PERFORMED ON ENTIRE POPULATION

GENERAL LINEAR MODELS PROCEDURE

CLASS LEVEL INFORMATION

CLASS	LEVELS	VALUES
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S 1	5	D E I M R
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JOB CAT	3	C P T
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NUMBER OF OBSERVATIONS IN DATA SET = 18774

25X1

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ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE
PERFORMANCE RATINGS OBTAINED IN FY 1979
ANALYSIS PERFORMED ON ENTIRE POPULATION

GENERAL LINEAR MODELS PROCEDURE

DEPENDENT VARIABLE: RATING

* NOTE: OTHER TYPE IV TESTABLE HYPOTHESES EXIST WHICH MAY YIELD DIFFERENT SS.

25X1

Approved For Release 2005/12/14 : CIA-RDP92-00420R000400040001-5

Approved For Release 2005/12/14 : CIA-RDP92-00420R000400040001-5

ANALYSIS PERFORMED ON GRADES 4 THRU 11

GENERAL LINEAR MODELS PROCEDURE

CLASS LEVEL INFORMATION

CLASS	LEVELS	VALUES
SD1	5	D E I N R
JBCAT	3	C P T

NUMBER OF OBSERVATIONS IN DATA SET = 10156

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